

News Release

U of M, Crookston Alumna Jean Fischer Whalen to Address Graduates on Saturday, May 5, 2012, at Commencement Exercises

By Itollefs on Monday, April 9, 2012

Working under a short-term contract for the United Nations as an official court reporter at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda changed the life of University of Minnesota, Crookston Alumna Jean Fischer Whalen (at right). The Class of 2012 will learn how taking advantage of this opportunity influenced her life during her address at commencement on Saturday, May 5. Commencement exercises will take place at 2 p.m. in Lysaker Gymnasium and will also mark the final graduation celebration for Charles H. Casey as the University's chancellor.



Whalen, who graduated from the U of M, Crookston with an associate degree in court reporting in 1980 and a baccalaureate degree in applied studies in 2009, currently works as an official court reporter in the Second Judicial District in St. Paul, Minn. The degree Whalen earned in 2009, she completed entirely online, making her the first online graduate to be a part of the platform guests at commencement. She values both her on-campus and online experiences at the U of M, Crookston and believes they provided her with the background she needed to take advantage of the opportunities life has given to her. She believes graduates need to be ready to take a chance.

Working at the genocide trials in Rwanda, Whalen was on a team of English court reporters. English and French were the two official languages of the trials which took place in Tanzania. She worked with a group of 16 court reporters from all over the world including Australia, New Zealand, Canada, the Gambia, Zimbabwe, and Zambia in the fast paced environment. Her experience working for the United Nations changed the way Whalen views global citizenship and heightened her recognition that we all share similar dreams and desires for happiness, peace, and dignity.

In 2008, Whalen received the Minnesota Association of Verbatim Reporters and Captioners Distinguished Service Award. She is a Registered Diplomat Reporter and Certified Real time Reporter.

For commencement details, visit www.umcrookston.edu/commencement.

Today the University of Minnesota, Crookston delivers 26 bachelor's degree programs, 18 minors, and 36 concentrations, including 10 online degrees, in the areas of agriculture and natural resources; business; liberal arts and education; and math, science and technology. With an enrollment of 1,600 undergraduates from 25 countries and 40 states, the Crookston campus offers a supportive, close-knit atmosphere that leads to a prestigious University of Minnesota degree. "Small Campus. Big Degree." To learn more, visit www.umcrookston.edu.

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